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The Cuban Military Buildup: Options for Castro

National Intelligence Estimate

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NIE 85/4-84/L November 1984

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NIE 85/4-84/L	
THE CUBAN MILITARY BUILDUP: OPTIONS FOR CASTRO	
Information available as of 15 September 1984 was used in the preparation of this Estimate, which was approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board on 2 October 1984.	
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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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SCOPE NOTE

Cuba's geographic position relative to the United States has attracted the attention of American strategists for over a centuryespecially as they searched for an American base from which to protect the approaches to the Panama Canal, much later when Castro came to power on the island and aligned his regime with the Soviet Bloc. The buildup of Cuban military forces, supported by an increased volume of Soviet military deliveries over the last few years, has posed new threats for US strategic interests in the region. In peacetime, Havana's growing military strength helps to support leftist governments and revolutionary movements worldwide and to provide a shield for destabilizing activities in the Caribbean Basin and Central America. During a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, Cuba's forces could threaten the southeastern United States, access to the largest source of US-imported oil, strategic facilities and pro-Western governments in the Caribbean Basin, and NATO shipping passing through the Straits of Florida and the Yucatan Channel.

This NIE addresses Cuba's improved military capabilities, the political and economic benefits that accrue to Cuba and the USSR therefrom, and the threats these might pose to US interests in the future. In addition, the NIE examines Castro's options and intentions concerning offensive actions in peacetime, as well as under the conditions that might accrue in the event of a European war fought short of a strategic nuclear exchange. The Estimate presents Havana's reactions to specific events in terms of general capabilities to conduct off-island actions. The NIE covers a five-year period and includes a projection of probable additions to the Cuban arsenal during that timespan.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

Cuban Military Capabilities and Intentions

Since the mid-1970s, Cuba's leaders have modernized their obsolescent armed forces as a result of their armed intervention abroad and their concerns about a direct US military reaction to their foreign operations. The Cubans—with the support of the Soviet Union—have improved their military capabilities by:

- Incorporating substantial numbers of new weapon systems—particularly more modern jet fighters, air defense systems, and naval combatants—into the force.
- Conducting more sophisticated training, including joint service exercises and occasional combined exercises with Soviet units.
- Acquiring additional civil air and merchant fleet assets to improve support for their forces overseas.
- Increasing the capability and size of their reserve forces by incorporating thousands of combat-experienced reservists, and forming a huge popular militia.

— Constru	cting redun	dant and ha	rdened fac	cilities to	improve	the
island's	ability to w	ithstand a co	onventiona	l attack.		

Prior to this buildup, Cuba was capable of defeating any invasion force short of a full-scale effort by a major power. Now a campaign designed to render Havana's armed forces impotent would require about double the effort that would have been needed about four years ago. A

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We believe that over the next five years Havana and its Soviet patrons will continue to raise the cost of any military effort against Cuba by integrating more modern weapons into the Cuban armed services. By the end of this decade, Cuba will be an even more difficult opponent—better able to defend itself, more capable of responding to requests from revolutionary governments, and more useful to the Soviets as a surrogate in Third World disputes. These anticipated improvements to Cuban defenses also will raise costs of effective US reactions to any particularly provocative Cuban acts—such as acquiring more capable offensive systems or developing the offensive capabilities

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inherent in existing systems—that would pose new threats to US interests. This is likely to make the enforcement of US limits on the	
overall threat from—and Soviet presence in—Cuba more difficult.	
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The available evidence indicates that the Cubans plan to continue to make increases in the size of each of their armed services over the next five years. Their goal appears to be to fill out and standardize units already in the field along with making continued improvements in their already large militia force. All of Cuba's training exercises and the nature of the bulk of its military equipment indicate that the primary mission of these forces will be to defend the island, rather than conduct off-island operations. There is at present no indication that either the Cubans or the Soviets intend to change the basic mission orientation of Cuba's armed forces during the period of this Estimate, although weapon systems with more offensive potential are likely to enter the Cuban inventory in the longer term.	25X1
We believe that over the next five years Havana will receive more of the same types of weapons now in its inventory. In addition, new systems that are likely to be introduced in Cuba include:	
— Nanuchka-class guided-missile patrol boats.	
— Truck-mounted Styx coastal-defense missiles.	
— IL-76 heavy transport aircraft.	
 Advanced versions of the MIG-23 interceptor. 	
— A new tactical surface-to-air missile, such as the SA-8.	
Barring strong US representations, Moscow may well provide Cuba with SA-5 surface-to-air missiles as well.	25 X 1
We consider the introduction of other new systems to be possible, but less likely. Among these are:	
— T-72 tanks.	
- MIG-25 interceptors.	
— SU-24 attack aircraft. (s NF)	
In Situations Short of War in Europe	
Castro is developing a capability independent of the Soviet Union to provide air defenses and/or supporting military forces to revolutionary groups and leftist governments. Should he choose to implement this	
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capability, indications of such activity are likely to be difficult to detect and ambiguous in nature:

- Havana now is capable of deploying and supporting some 10,000 troops in the Caribbean Basin to reinforce friendly regimes or to attack lightly defended targets.
- Havana could covertly position several thousand troops in Nicaragua using its regular flight schedule—we currently estimate there are some 2,500 to 3,500 Cuban military and security advisers in Nicaragua.
- In the case of smaller operations in the Caribbean region, Cuba could now provide some light arms and infantry in a matter of hours.

Over the next five years, Havana's ability to deploy troops overseas, particularly in the Caribbean region, will grow as it receives additional arms and transportation systems. This will pose a significant threat of intervention and intimidation to Cuba's neighbors, although Cuba will still lack the capability to successfully attack an opponent defended by the United States, and off-island Cuban forces will remain highly vulnerable to US military responses.

We believe that, in the absence of a major war in Europe or the Caribbean, Havana's most likely strategy will be to continue to use its military resources in ways calculated to avoid a military response by the United States. Cuba's probable course, therefore, will be to support insurgents, subversive elements, and leftist regimes—much as it did in Grenada, and is doing in Nicaragua and Africa. Cuba currently has some 45.000 military personnel abroad, the bulk of them in Africa.

We see no signs that Havana intends to undertake major offensive military actions independent of the Soviet Union during the period of this Estimate, although its armed forces will have an enhanced capability to do so. Castro is unlikely to undertake direct armed aggression in the Caribbean Basin because he probably believes that such an action would provoke a confrontation with the United States that might result in the loss of his vulnerable off-island forces or a punitive US action against Cuba. Meanwhile, he probably calculates that acquiring new weapons from the Soviet Union will not provoke a vigorous US response as long as these weapons are not perceived by Washington as posing a significant threat to the US mainland

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How Cuba and the USSR Profit From Their Military Relationship

From Havana's Point of View

The Castro government considers the United States its principal enemy and the greatest threat to the attainment of its basic national objectives: protecting the Revolution, fostering compatible regimes in the Western Hemisphere, and supporting the spread of international Communism. The buildup and modernization of the Cuban armed forces and their facilities contribute to the attainment of these objectives by:

- Deterring US military actions against Cuba.
- Improving Castro's ability to bolster revolutionary governments and movements worldwide.
- Increasing the international stature of his regime.

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Castro also derives certain domestic economic and political benefits from improving his forces. Among these are:

- Enhancing the security of his regime by further militarization of society.
- Transferring technical know-how to the Cuban economy.
- Reducing the problem of finding jobs for the post-Revolution generation.

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From Moscow's Point of View

The Soviets have underwritten the conversion of Cuba into a garrison state to benefit their own strategic objectives, as well as to respond to Castro's requests. Moscow's strategy is congruent with Havana's perceived defense requirements at several points:

— In peacetime. A militarily stronger Cuba, and the destabilizing activities emanating from that Cuba, might cause US policymakers and military planners to focus increased attention on the Caribbean Basin, and possibly redirect certain US political, economic, and military assets away from the USSR's area of primary interest, the Eurasian continent. By increasing the threat to US interests posed by the Castro regime while simultaneously raising the costs of military action against Cuba, the Soviets have caused the US Government to reassess its traditional economy-of-force strategy in the Caribbean Basin.



- Soviet penetration of the Western Hemisphere is facilitated by a secure Cuban state, which creates the opportunity to further mask the Soviet hand.
- Improved Cuban defenses—and the presence of the 2,900-man mechanized Soviet brigade—protect Soviet SIGINT and other assets in Cuba.
- Proficiency in standard Soviet export arms makes Cuban soldiers more useful in surrogate roles in Africa and perhaps elsewhere.
- Modernized Cuban forces visibly demonstrate the rewards of being a Soviet ally.
- Cuban facilities make possible the regularized deployment of Soviet air and naval forces in the Caribbean—materially enhancing Soviet reconnaissance capabilities against US air and naval elements in the western Atlantic.
- In wartime. A Cuban threat to regional bases, sea lines of communication, and the southeastern United States could distract Washington from events in Europe.
- The United States might use NATO-dedicated military resources against Cuba in anticipation of—or response to—hostile Cuban acts. At the least—regardless of whether Castro decided to join in the hostilities—Cuban potential for offensive actions could cause Washington to withhold forces from the European theater to deter Havana.

Likely Cuban and Soviet Behavior During a NATO–Warsaw Pact War

We judge it likely that Castro would seek to ride out the conflict, hoping to avoid a major attack by US forces. He also would hope that the superpowers would avoid a nuclear exchange. Havana almost certainly would mobilize and disperse its forces in preparation for the worst, but the unpredictable nature of events would keep Cuba's leaders cautious—fully aware of their vulnerable position, the strength of US forces, and the advanced alert status of US nuclear delivery systems.

We do not believe the Cubans would directly attack strategic regional facilities such as Mexican and Venezuelan oil refineries, the Panama Canal, or Guantanamo Naval Station because of fear that such actions would provoke a direct US response against Cuba, serve to further isolate Cuba in the region, and cut off Havana's vital external 25X1

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sources of supply. However, Cuban forces may engage in low-level harassment and sabotage, including covert efforts against these targets.	25 X 1
We believe that Castro would seek some assurance formula that would place Cuba in a position of "nonbelligerency" with regard to the United States, but not necessarily oblige him to intern Soviet forces in Cuba. He probably would be responsive to US demands that included political and economic incentives, allowed some room for face-saving maneuvers, and were backed by highly visible US forces. Moreover, Moscow might be satisfied with a passive contribution from Havana if Pact forces were meeting their objectives, some US forces were being withheld from combat in Europe because of Cuba, and Soviet intelli-	20/11
There remains a chance that Castro might instead decide on a much more aggressive course of action during a European war in response to—or anticipation of—a US attack on Cuba, in reply to pressure from the Soviets, or in the fatalistic belief—as reflected in certain of his speeches—that the European conflict would result in a superpower Armageddon. Even though Cuban attacks might temporarily disrupt the local war effort, we consider it unlikely that any Cuban military action against the United States would significantly detract	25X1
from US participation in the ongoing war in Europe. Moscow might view a Cuban offensive against the sea lines of communication in the Caribbean as an appropriate return on its investment, but an antishipping campaign is in many ways the least valuable action Castro could take on his own behalf. Such attacks would make no contribution to Cuba's defense, would focus US military attention on Cuba, and would squander resources essential to the defense of the island.	25X1 25X1
We believe there is little chance that the USSR would deploy nuclear weapons to Cuba during a period of greatly heightened tension. We have low confidence in our ability to detect the delivery of nuclear systems, particularly small cruise and air-to-surface missiles, but security measures and field deployment actions probably would signal their presence before they were operational, assuming sufficient resources could be devoted to analyzing Cuban activities in such a scenario.	25X1 25X1
Nevertheless, there are significant gaps in our knowledge of activities in Cuba. We cannot judge the quality of Soviet intelligence collection from Cuba, so we are unable to gauge the value of Moscow's Cuban sites in a European war. We cannot be sure of the quantity of major weapons—or all of the types represented—in the Cuban arsenal.	



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DISCUSSION

The Size and Nature of the Cuban Military Buildup

1. Since the mid-1970s, Cuba's leaders have modernized their obsolescent armed forces as a result of their armed intervention abroad and their concerns about a direct US military reaction to their foreign operations. The shipments of arms and military associated equipment that Havana has been given by the Soviet Union over the last four years are the largest since the missile crisis of 1962 (see figure 1). The equipment now being provided to Castro is not the latest in Soviet technology, although it is operated by East European forces and several other recipients of Soviet military aid. Nevertheless, these systems represent a considerable improvement in Cuban military capabilities, bringing the level of Soviet technology in Havana's forces forward at least a decade, from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s.

2. The first indication of a significant improvement in Cuban military capabilities was the delivery of improved Soviet guided-missile patrol boats, tanks, and surface-to-air missiles in 1976. When the dramatic delivery of MIG-23 jet fighters took place in 1978, the reequipage was proceeding with great vigor. The 1980 US presidential campaign further heightened Castro's perception of the threat from the United States.

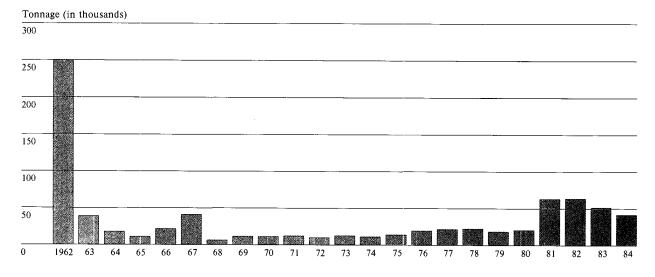
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3. According to Castro's comments at the 26th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces in December 1982, he asked Moscow to provide weapons ahead of the established 1981-85 schedule. The evidence to date indicates that not only were deliveries advanced to 1981 and 1982, but the entire five-year modernization plan, agreed upon prior to the US election, was upgraded to provide more weapons to Cuba

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Figure 1 Soviet Deliveries of Military Goods to Cuba as of 31 August 1984



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Table 1
Cuban Military and Security Forces,
Including Deployed Forces

Thousands

	1977	1984	1989
Military personnel			
Army (regulars)	100	110-120	135
Army (ready reserve)	60	110-135	135
Air and Air Defense Force	12	18.5	20
Navy	9.2	13	16
Ministry of Interior (Special Troops)	2	2.5-3	5
Subtotal	183.2	254-289.5	311
Other			
Militia a	100	1,000	1,000+
Youth Labor Army	100	80	80
Civil defense b	_	50-100	100
Border Guards	3	3.5	3.5
Police	10	12	15
Police auxiliary	50	52	52
Subtotal	263	1,197.5- 1,247.5	1,250.5
Total	446.2	1,451.5- 1,537	1,561.5+

^a Prior to 1980, this group was known as the National Revolutionary Militia—a largely paper organization that included civil defense. After Castro's edict, it became the Militia of Territorial Troops, exclusive of civil defense, and received training and arms. ^b When mobilized, civil defense includes the police auxiliary, firefighters, and similar organizations. Some reserve military personnel may be included in this category.

Conventional Deterrence

4. Prior to the current buildup, Cuba was capable of defeating any invasion force short of a full-scale effort by a major power. Now an invading force would have to mount an even more substantial effort. The types of equipment transferred to Cuba, the pattern of indigenous training programs, and the nature of military construction programs in progress throughout the island have greatly increased Cuban defensive capabilities. A campaign designed to render Cuba's armed forces impotent would require about double the effort that would have been needed about four years ago. A

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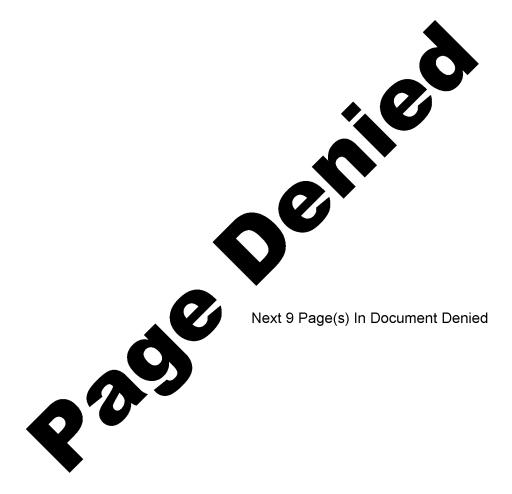
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Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/07/27 : CIA-RDP87T00126R001301760005-7 25X1 Secret 25X1 25X1 25X1 result in Soviet pressure on Castro to join in the conflict. 25X1 38. We believe there is little chance that the USSR would deploy nuclear weapons to Soviet forces in Cuba during a period of greatly heightened tension. Although some Soviet leaders might calculate that the During a NATO-Warsaw Pact War reduced reaction time and improved accuracy gained from land-based weapons in Cuba targeted against the 36. We believe Moscow's present wartime strategy United States could have a decisive deterring effect on with respect to Cuba is to attempt to redirect the US Washington, Moscow's more likely conclusion would effort in support of NATO toward the Caribbean. The be that the introduction of nuclear weapons into Cuba Soviets probably believe that a Cuban threat to regionwould raise, rather than lower, the chance of a nuclear al bases, sea lines of communications, or the southeastexchange. We have low confidence in our ability to ern United States would distract Washington's attendetect the delivery of small systems—cruise or air-totion from events in Europe, and would cause US surface missiles—because Havana's intelligence denial commanders to expend NATO-dedicated forces and measures have improved greatly during the buildup equipment against Cuban targets. At the very least, period. However, we believe that security measures Moscow would hope that, regardless of whether Castro and field deployment preparations almost certainly decided to join in the hostilities. Havana's increased would tip off their presence eventually. 25X1 potential to make trouble in the region would cause Washington to withhold forces from the European Benefits for Havana theater to deter Cuban aggression. 25X1 International Implications 37. In certain circumstances, the Kremlin might be satisfied with a passive Cuban contribution to the war 39. The buildup and modernization of the Cuban effort: that is, in the event the pace of the war in armed forces provides Castro with a number of advan-Europe met Moscow's expectations, if Pact success did tages. He has frequently acknowledged that Cuba not depend on delaying or destroying US reinforcecould not defeat a major US military force and could not depend on Soviet support should the United States 25X1 However, a failure in any or all of these areas might move against him. However, Castro probably calcu-24 25X1 Secret

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Caribbean Basin. The Caribbean ministates and Central American governments must depend on the Unit-25X1 ed States to deter outright Cuban aggression, but are vulnerable to a domestic coup that could lead to a "legitimate" request for Cuban forces to bolster a minority government. Access to a secure port or airfield would allow Castro to put several hundred lightly armed troops ashore in a matter of hours, thus presenting the United States with a difficult fait accompli.

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41. The expansion of the Cuban armed forces also allows Havana to send forces overseas without significantly weakening the island's defenses. These overseas forces gain practical combat experience while demonstrating Castro's commitment to support friendly revolutionary movements. Cuba's status and influence in the Third World also is increased as a result. In addition, receipt of improved arms visibly demonstrates Cuba's rising status in the Communist camp. provides Castro with leverage in his dealings with Third World nations, and allows potential Soviet client states to see for themselves some tangible benefits of an alliance with Moscow and Havana.

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Domestic Advantages

- 42. The Castro regime also derives certain domestic benefits from an improved military capability. Among these benefits are:
 - Increasing the domestic stature of the regime and the armed forces.
 - Enhancing the security of the regime by further militarization of society.
 - Professionalizing the officer corps.
 - Obtaining modern military technology that has a potential application to the Cuban economy.
 - Providing employment for a large percentage of military-age youth in a stagnant economy.

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43. The men who form the military arm of most revolutionary movements frequently develop their skills in a "learning-by-doing" fashion. Although Cuba's senior military leaders have been exposed to Soviet professional military education over the past two decades, they have learned their trade primarily through on-the-job experience. Military academies and war colleges have been constructed to provide a steady flow of more professional and technically prepared officers to assume leadership roles in the larger, more complex Cuban armed forces (see inset on page 26)

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44. As in most Third World economies, the bulk of Cuban workers have little opportunity to gain practi-

lates that raising the cost of an attack on Cuba gives him greater freedom to continue his disruptive behavior in other countries. Moreover, from within a garrison state, Castro can more readily take advantage of opportunities to bolster revolutionary movements with the knowledge that, while the United States might take action against his exposed off-island forces, an American attack on Cuba is less likely.

40. For many of Cuba's neighbors, Castro's power projection capabilities are the most worrisome aspect of the military buildup. Even though currently modest, these capabilities are considerable compared to the limited defenses of the pro-Western states of the

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Professional Military Education

Havana's long-term commitment to developing a professional military is attested to by its construction of new facilities for its military academies and postgraduate military colleges. A new Cuban "West Point" is under construction outside Havana and a fourth officer candidate school was completed in 1980. A new naval academy was built at Punta Santa Ana to produce officers for the Cuban Navy, Merchant Marine, and fisheries fleet. The new Cuban Air Academy at San Julian accepted its first class of about 50 students in September 1982; the graduates will receive a four-year college education while qualifying for a fighter pilot rating. These new facilities will graduate about four times the number of professional officers each year than their predecessors did, providing a gradual transition to a larger, more technically competent officer corps to replace over a period of two or three decades the revolutionaries now at the helm.

cal experience with sophisticated equipment. By operating and maintaining more advanced Soviet weapon systems, Cuban soldiers collect technical know-how for eventual infusion into the Cuban economy, particularly in the fields of electronics, communications, and transportation.

45. Finally, expanding the armed services helps to employ the fruits of the unprecedented surge in the Cuban birth rate that occurred in the early 1960s—almost 90 percent of the Cuban population is younger than its 58-year-old leader. Castro has failed to whip up the enthusiasm of the younger generation, who have come to take the benefits of the revolution for granted, lack the revolutionary zeal and motivation of their parents, and have found little opportunity in the stagnant Cuban economy. Castro probably hopes that a system of national service—primarily military—almost from cradle to grave—will provide the discipline and maturity necessary to reinvigorate the Revolution.

Cuban Intentions

46. Over the past three decades, Fidel Castro has proved himself a capable leader under the most trying circumstances. He remains firmly in control, by far the most influential member of the revolutionary cadre that controls Cuba. Fidel's brother Raul Castro, the present Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, has been his alter ego at the top from their days as guerrillas onward and remains his chosen

successor. Should Fidel die or become incapacitated, we do not believe that Raul's succession to power would make a substantial difference in the judgments reflected in this Estimate.

Under Peacetime Conditions

47. We do not believe that Havana will use its forces to undertake major offensive military actions in the area during the next five years. Castro's defensive posture during the events in Grenada clearly demonstrated his awareness of the vulnerability of his forces in off-island activity, his recognition of the limits of Soviet protection, and his surprise at the depth of US public support for military action in the Caribbean.

48. In our judgment, Havana almost certainly will avoid a direct confrontation with the United States, but will continue to support insurgents, subversive elements, and leftist governments by providing arms, advisers, and security specialists. Cuba's role in aiding the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada is typical of its most likely actions in pursuit of its long-range goal of fostering ideologically compatible governments in this hemisphere.

During a NATO-Warsaw Pact War 5

49. We believe it is likely that Castro, who traditionally has sought to keep his options open as long as possible, would seek to ride out a European conflict in the hope that the superpowers would avoid a nuclear exchange. We believe the Cubans are firmly dedicated to "proletarian internationalism," but not at the expense of the very survival of the Cuban revolution. Fear of devastating US retribution remains the key deterrent to Cuban adventurism, so Havana is unlikely to come to the aid of Soviet leaders who have refused repeatedly to formalize a military alliance and who will remain far from the Caribbean regardless of the outcome in Europe. Cuba's leaders recognize that the most they could hope for in a serious crisis with the United States would be a Soviet threat to escalate in an area of Soviet hegemony—an empty gesture during a NATO-Warsaw Pact war

50. We believe that Havana would seek to avoid issuing a formal declaration of neutrality because it would require Havana to comply with international laws regarding the internment of the Soviet brigade

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and termination of Soviet communications and SIGINT activities in Cuba. It seems more likely that Castro would opt for some sort of "nonbelligerency," a status not defined by international law, which might allow him more flexibility in his dealings with the combatants and other countries in the region (see annex C for a fuller discussion of neutrality and other restraints on Havana's offensive options).

- 51. Havana almost certainly would mobilize and disperse its forces in preparation for the worst, but the unpredictable nature of world events under such unique circumstances would keep Cuba's leaders cautious. If pressed by Moscow, Castro probably would attempt to compensate for his military inactivity by increasing anti-Western political, propaganda, and subversive efforts in the Third World. Even though Cuba officially remained a nonbelligerent, Castro could argue with some justification that the mere existence of his forces was diverting some US attention and military might from Europe
- 52. Should Cuba's leaders direct their armed forces to conduct hostile operations during a war in Europe, the list of options that follows is arranged in order of ascending risk—and descending likelihood of employment:
 - Engage in low-intensity warfare in the region.
 - Provide services to the Soviets.
 - Attack pro-Western governments in the region.
 - Attack strategic targets within his reach such as oilfields in Mexico and Venezuela, the Panama Canal, and Guantanamo Naval Station.
 - Interdict NATO's sea lines of communication.
 - Attack targets on the US mainland.

53. It is our judgment that the Cubans are unlikely to directly attack strategic regional facilities such as oil refineries, the Panama Canal, or Guantanamo Naval Station. Although Castro's forces might be able to temporarily disrupt the flow of petroleum from the region, such an action would leave Havana's own fuel sources open to retaliation and most likely would result in further isolation of the Castro regime. Impeding traffic through the Panama Canal is well within Cuban capabilities, but, here too, hostile Cuban actions probably would be counterproductive. The skeleton US combat unit at Guantanamo-some 300 to 400 Marines—would be unable to repel a determined Cuban attack. Such an action would increase the risk of a US attack on Cuba, however, without significantly affecting the outcome of the war.

54. Havana might be tempted to take advantage of US preoccupation with the situation in Europe to improve its position in Central America. Castro might attempt to use terrorism, subversion, and sabotage—techniques in which his forces are competent—to aid his local allies while avoiding a suicidal confrontation with the United States. His intelligence apparatus would keep him fully aware of the ongoing mobilization of US forces—both conventional and nuclear—and he would expect Washington to retain sufficient reserves to destroy Cuba.

55. There remains some chance, however, that under certain circumstances Castro might decide on a much more aggressive course of action.6 Unquestionably. Havana would respond to a direct US attack with every means at its disposal, but the possibility cannot be excluded that in a highly charged situation Castro might strike out against the United States or its regional allies for a variety of reasons that include a simple miscalculation of US intentions. For example, Castro could employ a few thousand lightly armed troops in actions against pro-Western governments in the region if he believed that US attention was being completely absorbed by the war in Europe. We do not believe that Havana would deploy larger forces or modern fighter aircraft in off-island actions in the face of probable US military retaliation.

56. We believe that, while Moscow might view a Cuban offensive against the NATO sea lines of communication in the Caribbean as an appropriate return on its investment, an antishipping campaign is in many ways the least valuable action Castro might take in his own behalf. Such attacks would make no contribution to Cuba's defense, would focus US attention on Cuba, and would squander resources essential to the defense of the island.

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Influencina Castro's Choice in Wartime

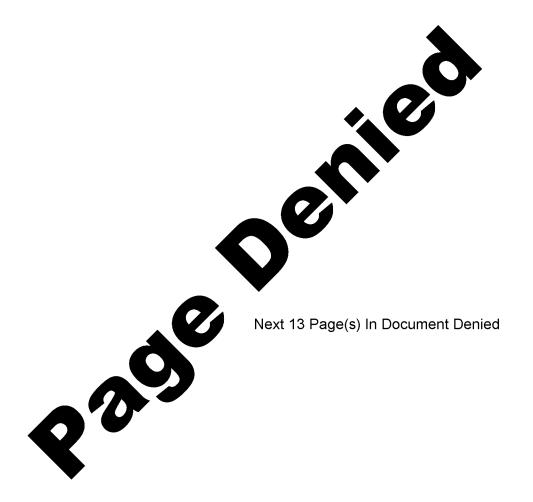
57. We believe the United States would be able to play upon Castro's fears of holocaust to negotiate an understanding with Cuba to stay out of the larger conflict. Before hostilities began, Castro would be most responsive to US demands that included political and economic incentives, were couched in such a manner

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as to leave some room for face-sawere backed by highly visible execute our demands should need probably would drive a hard since buying time would benefit hand Cuba, but, in return for a USC Cuba, he might agree to restrict defense and keep his naval comprobably would insist on his sover lize and deploy his armed for posture. 58. Negotiating limits to Sovic Cuba probably would prove to be believe that Castro could be consoviet operations from Cuban powere sure that Cuba's survival waying Soviet intelligence activities would be nearly impossible; Haence over Soviet intelligence activities would be unable to determine we gence collection had been terming States were to demand that Cubits Soviet mentors without leave maneuver and face saving, Casconclusion that war was inevitable.	forces sufficient to gotiations fail. Castro bargain, particularly both the Soviet Union of pledge not to attack his aircraft to island abatants in port. He ereign right to mobiraces in a defensive let use of facilities in the more difficult. We now inced to terminate arts and airbases if he as at stake. Terminatthrough negotiations wana has little influvities in Cuba, and a suban forces and the nermore, we probably whether Soviet intellinated. If the United a take action against wing some room for tro might reach the		25X1
tively against US targets.			25X1
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ANNEX C

FACTORS AFFECTING CUBAN PARTICIPATION IN A EUROPEAN WAR

- 1. Castro's Choice of Status. If the political and military situation in Europe were to deteriorate to the point of imminent conflict, Havana would be forced to make a decision on what status to adopt in relation to the hostile camps. Three general choices are available—neutrality, nonbelligerence, and belligerence—each of which poses some costs and benefits to the Castro regime.
- 2. Official neutrality (see inset) offers Cuba the best chance for surviving a great power clash, but would severely complicate certain Soviet/Cuban relationships. Under international law, Havana would be obliged to terminate Soviet SIGINT operations and military transmissions from Cuban territory, intern the Soviet brigade and military advisers in Cuba, and force Soviet naval vessels in Cuban ports to put to sea in short order. Although some of these legalities could be circumvented, a formal declaration of neutrality would tie Castro's hands for the duration of the conflict, severely limit his freedom of action after the termination of hostilities, and force him into a confrontation with his Soviet mentors. A victorious Warsaw Pact almost certainly would consider a Cuban declaration of neutrality to have been a sellout of the socialist cause and at least terminate Soviet aid and support if overthrow of Castro were not feasible.
- 3. However, a declaration of neutrality would not impair Cuban support for regional revolutionaries. Drawdown of NATO forces in the Caribbean Basin probably could allow Havana to increase its support for wars of national liberation and leftist governments. Depending on the outcome of the European conflict, Havana could be even more interested in diverting American scrutiny from the Castro regime to Central America
- 4. Adoption of a nonbelligerent status—not officially recognized in international law—would blur the technical niceties of neutrality while expressing Havana's desire to avoid a US attack. The problems of Soviet sanctuary, intelligence operations, and troop internment would remain contentious points of negotiation between the United States and Cuba, but, as long as Havana had some room for political face saving and

Neutrality

1907 Hague Convention V, Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons.

Article 3:

Belligerents are likewise forbidden to-

- (a) Erect on the territory of a neutral Power a wireless telegraphy station or other apparatus for the purpose of communicating with belligerent forces on land or sea;
- (b) Use of any installation of this kind established by them before the war on the territory of a neutral Power for purely military purposes, and which has not been opened for the service of public messages.

Article 11:

A neutral Power which receives on its territory troops belonging to the belligerent armies shall intern them, as far as possible, at a distance from the theatre of war.

It may keep them in camps and even confine them in fortresses or in places set apart for this purpose.

It shall decide whether officers can be left at liberty on giving their parole not to leave the neutral territory without permission.

1907 Hague Convention XIII, Concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in the Naval War.

Article 12:

In the absence of special provisions to the contrary in the legislation of a neutral Power, belligerent warships are not permitted to remain in the ports, roadsteads, or territorial waters of the said Power for more than twenty-four hours, except in the cases covered by the present Convention.

Article 13:

If a power which has been informed of the outbreak of hostilities learns that a belligerent warship is in one of its ports or roadsteads, or in its territorial waters, it must notify the said ship to depart within twenty-four hours or within the time prescribed by local regulations. 25**X**1

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refrained from offensive militar might be avoided. In answer to action, Havana could claim to be pointing out the reality of its position. Moreover, choosing no not lock Castro into a permanentallow him to reassess the situation progressed. 5. Cuban nonbelligerence was at the Naval War College in February and paramilitary actions American allies without causing a with US forces. As long as Cuba at the European conflict, Havana to develop allies in the region at the	Soviet demands for e doing its best while vulnerable strategic inbelligerence would to position, but would as the war in Europe tested in war games mary and April 1984. A variety of Cuban in support of Latin direct confrontation voided being a party was able to continue	9. Soviet Influence. Barring a preemptive US attack upon Cuba, Moscow cannot be sure of Havana's course of action. It is possible that the Soviets consider a nonbelligerent Cuba from which they could continue to collect intelligence more rewarding than a militarily active Cuba that would put their intelligence assets at risk. If quality intelligence continued to flow from Cuba and Pact forces achieved their objectives on the Continent, Moscow might well be satisfied with Havana's passive contribution. 10. On the other hand, Moscow's objective might be the diversion of US forces from a European conflict and expenditure of those forces against non-Warsaw Pact targets. If so, Moscow could demand active Cuban military participation in the conflict or even attempt to drag an unwilling Havana into the hostilities. For example, US naval war games have indicated that the Soviets through clandestine or covert actions	25X 25X 25X 25X 25X
7. A Cuban declaration of wathe Warsaw Pact, or a preempti United States is possible, but alreguarantee a devastating response, pertain that events would lead	we attack against the most certainly would Only if Castro were mexorably to his re-	against either the United States or Cuba could provoke the hostile response that Moscow might desire under the circumstances. 11. We are unable to ascertain Moscow's intended role for Cuba, but allowing a conflict in Europe to develop without committing Castro to hostilities keeps open the maximum number of Soviet and Cuban options. By encouraging preemptive attacks by either the United States or Cuba, the Kremlin would free Washington from the dilemma of stretching military resources to cover both the war in Europe and an undiminished Cuban threat to its strategic rear. 12. Nationalistic and Ideological Consider-	25X 25X
gime's demise would he be likely to open warfare. 8. Fear of US Retribution. military power is the single most Cuban military adventurism. Single 1980, Castro has cited the US the cause of continued austerity mea military buildup. He almost cert	Overwhelming US effective deterrent to ce the US election in a the sures and the Cuban	ations. Cuba's revolution is highly nationalistic and firmly dedicated to its own survival. Cuba's leaders are intensely loyal to Castro and would be unlikely to advocate joining a war on behalf of the Soviet Union without firm assurances about their future. Moreover, a Cuban decision to initiate a war on the United States almost certainly would meet popular resistance. There would be little understanding and support for volun-	25X
return for an attack on US facilicula would receive a massive receive an invasion. Mobilization reinforce his perception of the daposition, particularly since Cubaing distance of a large part of US after the bulk of US forces were stations, Castro would expect V sufficient military strength to depend on the content of t	etaliatory airstrike or of US forces would engers inherent in his lies within easy strik- S reserve units. Even deployed to wartime Washington to retain vastate Cuba if that is point of view, the	13. Castro has been reminded on several occasions—from the missile crisis of 1962 to recent events in Grenada—that Cuba is not vital to Soviet interests and that Moscow will not challenge US military power in the Caribbean to save its ally. Given these painful experiences, it is a virtual certainty that Castro would view with suspicion and mistrust any Soviet attempts to maneuver Cuba into an attack against the United States or US forces en route to Europe.	25X 25X1
most awesome threat to Cuba conventional war in Europe—US be at the highest state of alert and decisions made in Havana.	nuclear forces would	14. <i>Costs vs. Benefits.</i> On balance, Havana probably would calculate that the costs of participating in a European war far outweigh any benefits to be gained	25X
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thereby. Open hostility might gain the gratitude of the Soviets, but would threaten Cuba's continued existence. Castro would be virtually guaranteed that any hostile action on his part eventually would draw an overwhelming reaction from the United States while he was cut off from the Soviet aid upon which the Cuban economy and military capability are based

15. Castro could improve his position by lowering the level of hostility in the Caribbean. He could moderate his nation's vulnerability by negotiating for access to food and fuel in return for a statement of "narrow" neutrality or nonbelligerence and restrictions on his military forces. Through this approach, Cuba not only could survive the conflict, but also might emerge substantially independent of Soviet economic aid regardless of the outcome in Europe. Elimination of the last vestiges of the US trade embargo could help to spread enough Cuban influence in the Caribbean Basin and diffuse the postwar US threat to Cuba.

16. The Course of the War in Europe. As the course of the conflict unfolds, Castro's position probably would become more difficult. Were the Warsaw Pact forces to overwhelm NATO defenses rapidly, there would be less pressure on Cuba to participate in the war, although Havana might feel obliged to explain its lack of support to the postwar Soviet regime. Paradoxically, Castro might believe that a NATO defeat would result in a US attack on Cuba in order to have an unblemished US sphere of influence to counterbalance Soviet domination of Eurasia. On the other hand, every NATO success probably would bring renewed Soviet pressure on Havana to delay or divert the tide of US men and material en route to Europe.

17. A stalemate in Europe is perhaps the most perplexing situation that Cuba's leaders might facepressured by both sides, deprived of external supplements of food and fuel, and able to assist only the party that could not come to their aid. Havana's safest course would be to cement regional relationships in the hope that neither superpower would resort to using nuclear weapons to terminate the war and both were too drained by the conventional conflict to take revenge on Cuba. In short, a brief superpower conflict would not be in Cuba's interest, and a longer conflict would be even more dangerous.

18. Tactical Nuclear Weapons. The use of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe would foreclose many of Castro's options. He would view the resulting war as the immediate precursor to his long-anticipated Armageddon between the superpowers: Castro's speechesand Soviet doctrine-have strongly affirmed that crossing the nuclear threshold "would lead to the end of mankind." Under these circumstances, Castro's behavior is unpredictable: he might lash out against the United States in the belief that American devastation of Cuba was inevitable, or he might choose a lowprofile defensive posture in the hope that Cuba would be ignored in the strategic exchange that followed.

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19. The Impact of Events Elsewhere. Cuba's proximity to the United States places it in a far more precarious position than other Soviet allies who might answer Moscow's call to arms—few Soviet client states would directly confront US forces were they to make war on their neighbors. Castro could claim that the unique circumstances that apply to Cuba would mitigate against a Cuban offensive regardless of events in other theaters, or, if pressed, he might initiate anonymous unconventional military actions in areas farther from the United States in an effort to satisfy the Soviets without increasing the risk to his country.

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20. Cuban Vulnerabilities. Havana imports over 90 percent of its total petroleum supplies, almost all of its capital goods and transportation equipment, and more than half of its food. If Cuba's petroleum tanks were full at the outset, rationing of fuel might extend the supply to six months, but food consumption would drop rapidly to low-protein subsistence levels, and the Cuban economy would grind to a halt for lack of spare parts. Cuba would attempt to secure regional sources of its most needed imports, but lacks the hard currency necessary to support international trade. With limited raw materials and practically no finished products to exchange for supplies, Castro would have difficulty finding trading partners. Military pressure could force Havana to consume fuel and food at higher than subsistence rates and, if supported by a fuel embargo, might cripple Cuba's armed forces within a few months.

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21. We believe that an unprovoked Cuban offensive against the United States would generate some popular discontent in Cuba. Havana has voiced concern over the apparent lack of revolutionary fervor and ambition in Cuba's youth, and many Cubans have relatives in the United States. Neither of these groups would be eager to initiate military action against US targets even if politically prepared in advance.

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22. Castro's forces overseas would be cut off from their sources of supply and left to their own devices. These units are too small to be of much use in Europe, even if the Soviets could transport them to the war zone. Only the reduced Cuban military contingent in

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Ethiopia might be capable of reaching a strategic target—the Bab el Mandeb—but they would face French Foreign Legionnaires in Djibouti. Castro most likely would take the same tack he did with his forces in Grenada: call upon them to do their duty without hope of reinforcement or aid for the foreseeable future.

23. Havana and Moscow are certain to raise the cost of an attack on Cuba by continuing to upgrade the

Cuban inventory over the next five years, but outside their defensive perimeter, Cuban armed forces will remain vulnerable to an overwhelming retaliatory blow delivered by a small portion of US forces. Regardless of Moscow's aid, Havana does not have the economic, physical, and population resources necessary to overcome US domination of the Caribbean Basin.

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ANNEX D

CASTRO'S MILITARY OPTIONS IN A NATO-WARSAW PACT WAR

- 1. Should Cuba's leaders direct their armed forces to conduct hostile operations during a European war, the list of options that follows is arranged in order of ascending risk—and descending likelihood of employment. Washington's preoccupation with the war in Europe, Soviet pressure for Cuban action, and Castro's own reading of the postwar environment are the primary factors that would influence him to refrain from hostilities or choose from among these alternatives
- 2. Low-Intensity Warfare. Havana could plausibly deny its involvement in acts of terrorism, sabotage, and unconventional warfare conducted in the region. Special Troops, underwater demolitions teams, or Cuban agents in place are proficient in unconventional military operations. Elements of such units could be inserted on short notice along virtually any coastline in the area by Cuban submarines and patrol craft, fishing boats, or pleasure vessels. If sufficient time were available, even commercial vehicles could be used to pre-position small groups of terrorists and saboteurs
- 3. While it is possible that Castro might turn loose as many as 2,000 to 3,000 terrorists and saboteurs, we believe the practical limit of his clandestine transportation systems to be less than 1,000 people. Even so, a carefully orchestrated campaign could disrupt the war effort in selected areas of the United States and distract US military planners from deploying forces against their primary adversaries.
- 4. Services to Combatants. We believe that peacetime Cuban intelligence collection enhances and complements known Soviet targeting, and that most if not all Cuban results are shared with Moscow. Cuban collectors would be employed to monitor US mobilization, deployment, and alert status for information critical to their own defense efforts, and pass their take to the Soviets without endangering Cuba.
- 5. The United States would force the termination of Soviet reconnaissance flights from Cuba early in the conflict, and, if other Soviet strategic delivery systems arrived in Cuba during a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, Cuban options to remain outside the conflict almost

certainly would be foreclosed. However, war games conducted by the Naval War College Strategic Studies Group demonstrated that Havana could provide rearming, refueling, and minor repairs to Soviet submarines operating in the region. Punta Movida's newly constructed submarine handling facilities would be suitable for servicing operations.

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6. Attacks Against Pro-Western Governments. If Castro believed that the United States was fully preoccupied with the war in Europe, he might opt to deploy a portion of his armed forces to Central America or the eastern Caribbean. The most likely forces to be used in off-island adventures are the Special Troops, the Landing and Assault Brigade, or lightly armed infantry units. Havana could initiate a major military action abroad by operating through a safe air or sea port with these forces, but lacks the logistics base to support independently larger maneuver elements in the field. Havana might use obsolescent aircraft such as its early model MIG-21s to support surface actions while a power vacuum existed in the Caribbean, but the deployment of more modern Cuban fighters from the island in the face of a US

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7. Destroying Strategic Regional Targets. Castro's forces are capable of attacking strategic targets in the region, such as the oil resources of Mexico and Venezuela, the Panama Canal, and Guantanamo Naval Station, but each has certain characteristics that make such attacks counter to Cuban interests and

difficult to prosecute:

threat is unlikely.

— Regional Oil Resources. The US war effort would be fueled in large part from Mexico and Venezuela. Cuba could reach the key ports and refineries only by direct seaborne commando raids against the facilities, or, in the case of Mexico, by operating its aircraft through Nicaraguan airfields. Either way, Cuban forces would be exposed to foreign reaction and implicated in an unquestionably hostile act. A campaign against the ports and refineries might disrupt the flow of petroleum from the region temporarily, but would put Havana's own regional fuel sources at risk. The most likely result of a Cuban

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attack on Mexico or Venezuela would be the further isolation of the Castro regime.

- The Panama Canal. The Canal is vulnerable to attack in many forms, but its massive construction makes its basic structure almost impervious to conventional explosives. War games have demonstrated that scuttling merchant vessels in the locks might be the best method to delay the flow of traffic through the Canal. Sinking a ship laden with dry bulk cargo could close a lock for several days and force local authorities to impose security restrictions that further impeded passage for an indefinite period.
- Guantanamo. The skeleton US combat element at Guantanamo—some 300 to 400 Marines—would be unable to repel a determined Cuban attack. At best, Guantanamo would remain an extremely vulnerable bargaining chip in US-Cuban negotiations. It would be of little military value to either side during the conflict.
- 8. An Antishipping Campaign. From the Soviet point of view, the best return for Moscow's investment in Cuba might be earned by a Cuban campaign against NATO vessels in the sea lines of communication through the Caribbean (see figure D-1). About 40 percent of the US military goods pledged to NATO and 85 percent of the fuel necessary to propel our war effort in Europe are scheduled to transit the sea channels bordering Cuba. Sinking NATO shipping would simultaneously decrease the flow of war materials and tie down US forces in this hemisphere, giving Castro an opportunity to effect the outcome of a war in Europe. However, from the Cuban perspective, an attack on NATO shipping is in many ways the least valuable action that Havana could take and makes no contribution to Cuba's defense. Instead, such an attack would focus US attention on Cuba and squander resources essential to the defense of the island in support of a benefactor incapable of coming to Havana's aid prior to the cessation of hostilities in Europe.
- 9. The primary threats to NATO sea lines of communication are Foxtrot-class submarines, Styx missiles fired from Osa and Komar patrol boats, and attack aircraft, in that order. The Foxtrot is the modern equivalent of the World War II U-boat—somewhat larger and more capable than the German submarines that conducted devastating patrols off the Gulf ports in 1942. Although Havana could employ its submarines to conduct torpedo attacks and lay mines, addi-

tional training is needed in both applications for these weapon systems to reach their full combat potential. (s

- 10. The Styx missile is judged to be at least 70 percent reliable against undefended targets under the conditions that prevail in the Caribbean. Cuban crews are proficient in missile operations and could threaten unprotected shipping, but the likelihood of successful attacks could be significantly diminished by US air patrols over choke points. An initial surprise raid would have the best chance for success; however, further opportunities could be severely limited by a fairly small defending force using aggressive countermeasures in the confined areas adjacent to Cuba. In any case, Cuba probably would want to keep its Osa force intact for island defense rather than commit it to antishipping operations.
- 11. All Cuban aircraft could be used against NATO shipping, but lack of pilot proficiency in antiship warfare would limit their effectiveness. Coastal patrols by armed helicopters have increased recently and have included firing on vessels violating Cuban waters, and, although Cuban pilots have not been trained to conduct air-to-surface or antitank missile attacks on ships at sea, they might be used to locate targets to be attacked by other weapon systems.
- 12. A Direct Attack on the US Mainland. Castro could opt for a direct attack on the US mainland to dramatically demonstrate Cuban military ability in response to or in anticipation of a US attack on Cuba, in answer to a request for aid from the USSR, or in the belief that the European conflict was sure to result in a superpower Armageddon that would destroy civilization. Castro would expect that this desperate alternative would guarantee a massive US response; it certainly violates the primary Cuban objective of survival by focusing US military attention directly on Cuba.
- 13. If this option were selected, a full mix of Cuban military capabilities probably would be employed. Most likely, terrorists and unconventional warfare experts would infiltrate into the United States, and Cuban agents already in place would be activated. Cuban aircraft could conduct a limited number of attacks on US mainland targets, the success of which would depend in great measure on the state of US defenses. While Cuban raids might temporarily disrupt the local US efforts to support the war in Europe, it is unlikely that any Cuban military action against the US mainland would significantly detract from US participation in the ongoing European war.

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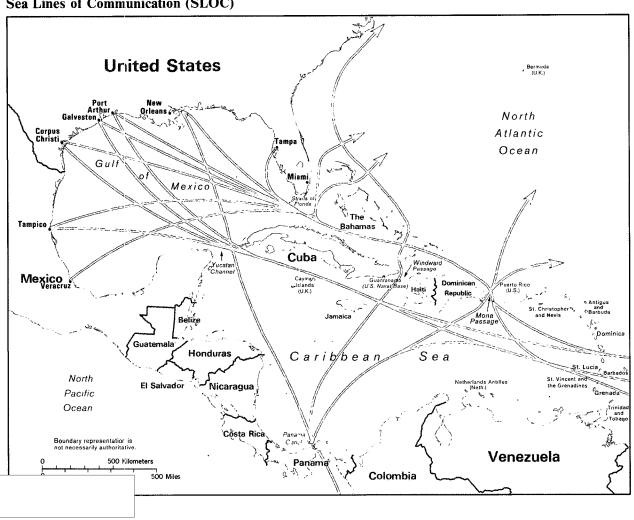
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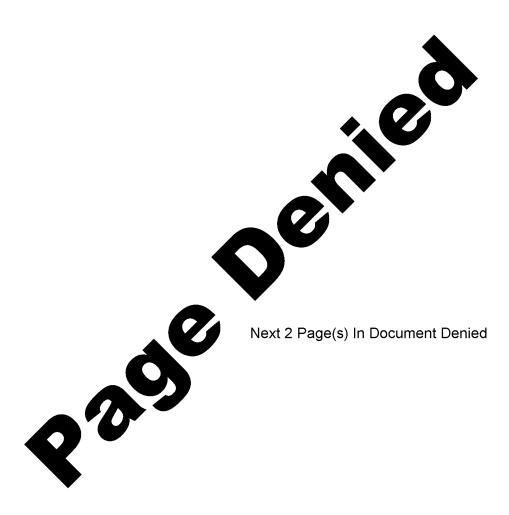
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Figure D-1 Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC)

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